

1997 The United States Catholic Bishops publish "Called to Global Solidarity," calling for Catholic Dioceses and parishes to actively live out the call of our faith to unite with others as one family across the globe.

2000 Seventeen delegates from St. Cloud Diocese and CRS traveled to Homa Bay, making up the first of what would be many exchanges of people, culture, faith and friendship in the years to follow.

2001 After two delegations to Kenya, the first delegation from Homa Bay travels to Minnesota. From here on out, delegations are on a regular rotation, allowing both partners to experience the life, place and people of one another.

January 2004 Sauk Centre's Catholic School volunteered for a mission education initiative with a school in Homa Bay, requesting it be within Migori, thus furthering a relationship they had begun when hosting a delegate the previous year. They became the first "Sister Parish," a grass-roots partnering trend that has continued and grown elsewhere.

2016+ We sent 16 delegates, including Bishop Kettler, to Homa Bay in February 2016 as part of the eighth diocesan delegation there, and we are preparing to welcome a delegation from Homa Bay in 2017. No material projects are currently happening, rather our dioceses are focusing on prayer and relationship-building as we strive to live out peace, solidarity and unity in an all-too-often troubled world!

St. Cloud - Homa Bay Partnership Timeline

"If you meet people, talk with them and laugh with them, you learn a true perspective of them and their lives. If you know a group of people, and develop friendship, there is no room for fear or hate or war." (Theresa, delegate to Homa Bay in 2006)

1999 In an effort to help the church live out the challenge put forth in "Called to Global Solidarity," Catholic Relief Services teamed up with St. Cloud, Minnesota (led by Bishop John Kinney, who served on the CRS board and had partnering experience in his previous diocese) and Homa Bay, Kenya, a new diocese in East Africa.

August 2004 Exchange of missionary personnel begins as Sr. Karen Niedzielski, OSF and Sr. Anita Jennissen, OSF begin their ministry in Homa Bay Diocese, while Fr. Paschal Otieno of Homa Bay travels north to become the first missionary priest to St. Cloud Diocese. A month later, two Sisters of St. Joseph in Asumbi come to Minnesota as the first of two pairs to serve two years with the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls as part of their partnered community.

August 24, 2000 Only months after the first delegates spent time with Fr. John Kaiser while in Homa Bay, the Mill Hill Missioner was killed by those who didn't like how he stood up for social justice and the oppressed people of Kenya.

2008 When widespread violence erupted in Kenya following their presidential elections, the people of St. Cloud united in prayer for our partners.

2013 While in Homa Bay, St. Cloud delegates heard the announcement of their new Bishop. Bishop Philip Anyolo and Fr. Abraham Ayieko came shortly after to share in the instillation celebration of Bishop Donald Kettler.

To-date St. Cloud is being served by its fourth Kenyan priest, Fr. Tom Mboya. We have seven parish clusters or communities involved in a Sister Parish relationship. We have sent eight official Diocesan delegations and received six from Homa Bay, with 165 delegates combined, in addition to other exchange visits between sister parishes, individuals and universities in the diocese. We have supported sustainable grain storage, water and youth education projects. Priests, deacons, sisters and laity from St. Cloud have spent extended periods of time in Homa Bay, and countless faithful of both dioceses have grown in faith through the partnership!